
Activity Report 2017

The IFGK continued to have ten active and six dormant members during the reporting period. The active members are: Martin Arnold, Anne Dietrich, Reinhard Eismann, Albert Fuchs, Mirjam Mahler, Gudrun Knittel, Barbara Müller, Achim Schmitz, Christine Schweitzer and Roland Vogt.

Activities of the IFGK staff

During the reporting period, Dr. Martin Arnold was mainly active in refugee work and at the Round Table on the Environment in Essen. At the study day on 25 November he presented a new study on Corder Catchpool's talks with the Nazis in the 1930s, their successes and their conditions (see below and the following documentation). As a result of his research, he conducted "Gandhi for Home Use ..." workshops in Essen; a group meets there monthly at the Unperfekthaus for an open "Gütekraft-Stammtisch", see www.Martin-Arnold.eu.

Anne Dietrich continues to work as a peace expert for GIZ; she has been in Rwanda since October 2016.

Reinhard Eismann: The focus of Reinhard Eismann's work in 2017 was the preparation of a draft statute for the new foundation association to be set up by the IFGK and BSV, into which the IFGK's endowment money will flow (see below).

In 2017, Reinhard Eismann continued to work as an individual on the campaign council of the campaign "Power Peace. Civil solutions for Syria" campaign. Likewise, he again participated in the biannual meetings of CampaNet.

Prof. Dr. Albert Fuchs participated in the discussion about the Foundation and served as an auditor. He is also involved in the Bonn Peace Alliance, pax christi, the Peace Psychology Forum and as an advisor to the journal Wissenschaft und Frieden.

Among other things, Gudrun Knittel provides process support for housing and construction projects, conducts training on consensus decision-making procedures, competences for constructive conflict management and dialogue principles. She organised the IFGK study day 2017.

Mirjam Mahler left her job as Executive Director at the Fellowship of Reconciliation towards the end of 2017. She is completing training at the Project Alternatives to Violence (PAG).

Dr Barbara Müller looks after the finances of the BSV as treasurer. Professionally, she works mainly as a counsellor in Hunsrück (see her website <https://www.dr-barbara-mueller.com/>). She has also continued to work on the transfer of a training concept originating from India (Composite Heritage). Bread for the World is now leading the work on this.

Dr Achim Schmitz continued his teaching assignments with units on non-violent conflict resolution and communication at vocational schools in Waiblingen and Stuttgart as well as communication training at the University of Stuttgart.

In the year under review, he found a new full-time position as a lecturer for German lessons in refugee work, among other things. For this he successfully completed an additional qualification as an integration course teacher. In November, he returned to NRW after many years to offer an integration course in Krefeld. In the Fellowship of Reconciliation and in pax christi he was active in the commissions for peace education.

Dr. Christine Schweitzer: In addition to her work as executive director of the BSV, she carried out the following activities as a staff member of the IFGK:

One focus of her work continued to be the editorial work for the journal Friedensforum (www.friedenskooperative.de).

In May/June 2016, she produced the documentation of a conference of the Cooperation for Peace and the Syria campaign MACHT.FRIEDEN (http://www.macht-frieden.de/sites/default/files/inline-files/Doku_Aktionskonferenz_Syrien_Mai_2017.pdf).

In addition, she provided coaching for a peace worker who went to Myanmar for the Weltfriedensdienst.

In November 2017, she participated as a documenter in a Nonviolent Peaceforce workshop in Manila on "good practices" in the field of civil peacekeeping. (The report is finished, but not yet online).

She has also written several articles (e.g. on the Korean conflict from a peace logic perspective).

Roland Vogt continues to serve on the board of the supporting association for the Peace Academy of Rhineland-Palatinate.

Study days

The IFGK organised one study day during the reporting period: On 25 November 2017 in Cologne. Topic: "Nonviolent confrontations with dissidents - experiences, suggestions, challenges". An article about it was published in the newsletter of the Bund für Soziale Verteidigung (<http://www.soziale-verteidigung.de/fileadmin/dokumente/rundbriefe/rb181online.pdf>). The documentation will be published after the completion of this report and can then be downloaded from our website or ordered as a paper from the Bund für Soziale Verteidigung.

The next study day will take place on 17 November 2018; probably in Neuwied.

International networking, cooperation and representation

Martin Arnold continued to represent the IFGK at the Association for Peace and Conflict Research (AFK).

Roland Vogt represented the IFGK at the Network Peace Education Rhineland-Palatinate.

Christine Schweitzer represented the IFGK at the Council Meeting of War Resisters' International (WRI) (albeit via Skype) and at the German Friends of War Resisters' International, of which she is Chairperson.

Several IFGK staff members attended the annual meeting of the Bund für Soziale Verteidigung (BSV) in Magdeburg in March 2017.

Several IFGK members also attended the meeting of the Platform for Civil Conflict Transformation.

Management and public relations

The management of the IFGK continues to be carried out by several staff members who share the workload. Barbara Müller is responsible for everything to do with finances and personnel. Christine Schweitzer is in charge of the website, is responsible for the organisational preparation of study days and looks after the distribution list for interested parties, the information folder and the annual report. Other tasks such as preparing the content of study days etc. are carried out on a rotating basis.

The chairpersons of the IFGK e.V. remain Achim Schmitz and Martin Arnold; the treasurer is Barbara Müller. Auditors are Regine Kranich and Albert Fuchs.

All core IFGK work is done by the staff on a voluntary basis.

The IFGK has handed over the distribution of its working papers to the Bund für Soziale Verteidigung.

The planned foundation: The IFGK has approached the FSIO with the question of whether a joint foundation should be set up. The aim of the foundation association is to invest the IFGK's endowment money (currently € 10,000), which it has collected in recent years, profitably using ethical criteria and thus build up permanent reserves.